

PSBRC Memorandum 16 – 01

Date: February 9, 2016

To: PSBRC Committee Members

From: Ken Castner, Chair

Subject: Preparation for Next Council Work Session

I have the following thoughts concerning the Council's desire to look at alternative means, methods, and costs, to address the building needs housing our public safety programs.

This follows Beth's proposal to the Council in January to choose one of the alternatives we sent them, and their lack of consensus for any of the three.

It serves none of us well to have this project lose momentum, or become poorly packaged, or fail to gather voter support. I believe it is time to pull the project apart and accomplish what can be done as the monies become available. Chief Painter's memorandum seems to support such a move.

There is no reason to delay addressing the maintenance and safety concerns at the fire department building. The city has the money, but not the will to spend the money, to make the necessary upgrades to the building. This is a project that could begin immediately.

The smaller of the two buildings on the worksite HERC can be demolished. This is also a project that can be accomplished soon. There are however some public policy concerns that add a considerable sum to the demolition of that building. Carey Meyer, the public works director, estimates the cost of disposal of the debris to be over \$200,000. The debris is good solid fill for the most part, and there are many places in Homer where it could be put to advantage, at little or no cost. There is however, an existing ordinance preventing this. If there is an ambition to achieve cost savings, all aspects of the project need to be examined.

Before construction can begin for a new police station, the existing community skateboard park needs to be relocated. This is going to take more time than one may think. I believe it is incumbent on the city to include replacement of the skateboard park is a priority item, not an afterthought.

Finally, we are going to have to come to grips with the fact that police stations/public safety centers are, by their very nature, expensive structures. The additional costs of security, durability, 24-hour use, and longevity add greatly to the cost of building construction. We can argue about the square footages needed, and the future demands of a community that is either growing or shrinking, depending on who you ask. But once those issues have been

settled, we have in place a contracting method that should bring some assurance to getting the most value for the best price. I have always thought that we would be presenting a \$10 million bond proposition to the voters. It seems like a lot of money - in fact it is a lot of money - but 21st century construction costs for coastal Alaska reflect that kind of money for this type of project.

Our committee will have failed if we can't convince the Council to move ahead with some plan to address rehabilitation or replacement of our public safety infrastructure. Then the Council is going to have to convince the public that the expenditure is both fiscally and socially prudent.

Our task now, is to do something that we have yet to be able to achieve: we need to agree at the committee level what the best course of action is. Time is growing short.